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DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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To: Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke, Chair
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From: Patricia S. Ploehn, LCSW
Director

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RESPONSE TO JANUARY 14, 2008, AUDITOR-CONTROLLER REVIEW OF CHILD PROTECTION HOTLINE

On August 28, 2007, the Board of Supervisors directed the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to work in concert with the Auditor-Controller and the Director of Children and Family Services to conduct a review of a statistically valid number of calls made to the Child Protection Hotline within the last year, examining issues such as response times, quantity and nature of calls, current mechanisms for quality control, reasons for dropped calls and the utilization of the callback message system; and report back to the Board within 30 days with findings and recommendations.

On January 14, 2008, the Auditor-Controller submitted his review to your Board in a report titled "Child Protection Hotline." As promised in that report, this memo provides a detailed corrective action plan to implement the Auditor-Controller's recommendations for improving the Child Protection Hotline's operations.

The Department of Children and Family Services is committed to ensuring continued improvement in our Hotline operations by answering all calls in a timely manner, particularly calls routed to the Supervisor and Overflow groups. We will also ensure we have processes in place that effectively monitor the areas of improvement discussed below.

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

The Auditor-Controller identified the following areas for improvement:

- Increased Monitoring
- Queue (Response) Times
- Abandoned/Dropped Calls

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- Callback Messaging System
- Hotline Staffing

We agree with all of the recommendations contained in the Auditor-Controller's report and have implemented a number of corrective actions consistent with the enhanced accuracy and timely response for calls made to the Child Protection Hotline (CPH).

The corrective action plan to implement the Auditor-Controller's recommendations is as follows:

RECOMMENDATION	ACTION TAKEN	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
1. Re-evaluate the 60 second average "speed to answer" standard and, as appropriate, implement a new standard based on current performance.	1) In October 2007, the CPH Administration re-evaluated and centralized the Supervisors' call monitoring duty. 2) In November 2007, the CPH Administration implemented the "Rapid Response Team" (RRT). The main goal of the RRT is to expedite the assessments of calls received through the 800 line. CPH Administration forecast that the centralization of the RRT will assist the Hotline in revising the average "speed to answer" standard to 30 seconds for Safe Haven, Consultation, English and Spanish call groups.	Regional Administrator (RA) Cleo Robinson and Assistant Regional Administrators
2. Establish an average "speed to answer" call standard for the Supervisor and Overflow groups.	1) The CPH Administration re-evaluated Supervisors' duty functions to ensure calls transferred to the Supervisor groups will be answered within 60 seconds. 2) The CPH Administration re-evaluated Floor Supervisors' duty functions to ensure calls transferred to the Overflow groups will be answered within 90	RA Cleo Robinson and Assistant Regional Administrators

	<p>seconds.</p> <p>3) The CPH Administration completed a comparison review of the average "speed to answer" for October 2007 – January 2008 to ensure ongoing evaluation of results. The findings reflect CPH met the newly proposed standard for this period, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 60 seconds for SCSW call group o 90 seconds for Overflow call group 	
<p>3. DCFS management monitors the effectiveness of the Rapid Response Team and takes corrective actions, as necessary, to ensure queue times are within the established standard.</p>	<p>1) CPH Administration assigned a CPH-Supervising Children's Social Worker (SCSW) to monitor the effectiveness of the Rapid Response Team.</p> <p>2) The CPH-SCSW will conduct quality assurance reviews and will make recommendations as to the RRT's overall performance.</p> <p>3) The preliminary evaluation of the effectiveness of the team revealed the Hotline could benefit from the expansion of the RRT across shifts Monday - Friday.</p> <p>The timeline for this expansion is March 31, 2008, contingent on the recruitment of additional staff that is currently in process.</p> <p>4) CPH Administration will re-evaluate the RRT effectiveness during the next six months to finalize a change in the average</p>	<p>1) RA Cleo Robinson, Assistant Regional Administrators and Supervisors</p> <p>2) RA Cleo Robinson and Bureau of Information Services Assistant Regional Administrator and Supervisor</p>

	<p>"speed to answer" standard waiting period from 60 seconds to 30 seconds. The rationale for the six month period is to ensure the RRT is effective during the highest call volume months.</p>	
4. Take additional steps to reduce queue times for calls assigned to the Supervisor group with the goal of reducing abandoned/dropped calls.	<p>See Recommendation # 1, Action Taken # 1 and Recommendation # 2, Action Taken # 1. Please note the recommendations and actions outlined above will address Recommendation # 4.</p>	RA Cleo Robinson, Assistant Regional Administrators and Supervisors
5. Evaluate the need for additional bilingual (Spanish) Children's Social Workers (CSW) assigned to the Hotline.	<p>1) During October and December 2007 CPH Administration hired three additional Spanish speaking CSWs. 2) Nine as-needed CSWs were hired on November 11, 2007. Of the nine employees, two staff are Spanish speaking.</p>	Assistant Regional Administrators and Supervisors
6. Consider establishing a unit whose sole function is to ensure the prompt and proper disposition of all callback messages.	<p>See Recommendation # 3, Action Taken # 1 and # 2. Please note the recommendations and actions outlined above address Recommendation # 6.</p> <p>Below is a more detailed description of the Rapid Response Team (RRT) function:</p> <p>On February 1, 2008, the Child Protection Hotline centralized the RRT supervision under one Supervising Children Social</p>	Assistant Regional Administrators

	<p>Worker (SCSW).</p> <p>The centralization of the RRT staff members will increase monitoring of callback activities and enforce compliance with standards.</p> <p>The RRT SCSW will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monitor the workflow from the start to the completion of callbacks. ○ Review documentation for accuracy. ○ Facilitate the tracking of processing times and customer satisfaction. ○ Conduct daily reviews of callback books and the RRT's logs. Ensure the prompt and proper disposition of each callback message. ○ Identify weaknesses within the process and track staff performance and compliance with policy. ○ Assess the need for additional training and/or corrective action. 	
<p>7. Require SCSWs to increase their monitoring to ensure all callback messages are returned within 30 minutes and are properly documented and dispositioned.</p>	<p>See Action Taken on Recommendation # 3. Please note the actions outlined above will address recommendation # 7. Expected completion date: March 2008.</p>	<p>RA Cleo Robinson and Assistant Regional Administrators</p>

<p>8. Increase its monitoring to ensure the Hotline's callback activities meet Departmental standards and, if not, initiate appropriate corrective action.</p>	<p>See Recommendation # 3, Action Taken # 1 and # 2. Please note the recommendations and actions outlined above will address Recommendation # 8.</p>	<p>RA Cleo Robinson, Assistant Regional Administrators and Supervisors</p>
<p>9. Develop a template callback message slip that prompts workers to more adequately document callback messages (e.g., with time, date, description of allegation, etc.).</p>	<p>A template stamp was developed and implemented in December 2007. In January 2008, CPH Administration began exploring the use of the Tablet Personal Computer (PC) to track and document callback messages. Expected date for the evaluation of the Tablet PC is March 2008. The Tablet PC will have a template that captures the call date and time, the nature of the call, the number of attempts to reach the caller, and the disposition on the callback message. The new template will be designed to facilitate entering relevant information by the SCSWs before submitting it to the CSWs, and by the CSWs upon completion. The template will help ensure callback messages are monitored to determine if they are made timely, this will include numbering the message slips and establishing a log to help track which messages are outstanding/completed. Action taken on Recommendations # 3, #6 and #7 will also help address this recommendation.</p>	<p>ARA S.Y. Woo and Supervisors</p>

10. DCFS management consider modifying the Automatic Call Distributor (ACD) selection menu to allow callers to select the callback feature after the caller has been placed in a call group.	1) CPH Administration conducted three meetings with the Internal Services Department (ISD) and telephone vendors regarding modifying the ACD selection menu. Expected date for evaluating other options to make the menu more user-friendly is February 2008. 2) CPH Administration has requested an alteration and improvement for the telephone system for FY 08-09 to cover any costs to modify the ACD selection menu.	RA Cleo Robinson
11. DCFS management develop a formal protocol to notify CPH management timely of anticipated outside influences (e.g., media events, etc.) that may affect the volume of calls to the Hotline.	CPH Administration worked with the Department's Public Affairs Office to develop a written protocol which was formalized in January 2008. The written protocol was shared with CPH managers and Supervisors on January 30 th and 31 st , 2008.	RA Cleo Robinson

If you have any questions, please call me or your staff may contact Armand Montiel, Board Liaison, at (213) 351-5530.

PSP:EM:cr

c: Chief Executive Officer
Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Children and Families' Well-Being
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Auditor-Controller